

La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources	2013	
SFY Allocation	\$3,897,043	
Population Based Allocation	\$2,148,846	
Discretionary Allocation	\$1,262,570	
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)	\$485,627	
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$1,353,989	
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$5,251,032	
Strategies	Proposed Allotment	Board Approvals, 1/17-18, 2012 FY13 Strategies and Amounts
Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships	\$1,193,100	Approved
Quality First (statewide)	\$299,975	Held
Child Care Health Consultation (statewide)	\$40,320	Approved
Quality First Child Care Scholarships (statewide)	\$266,740	Approved
Scholarships TEACH (Additional TEACH) (statewide)	\$66,000	Approved
Community Based Professional Development (ECE)	\$400,000	Approved
Family, Friends & Neighbors	\$100,000	Approved
Home Visitation	\$1,200,000	Approved
Parent Coaching – Children with Special Needs	\$150,000	Approved
Court Teams	\$400,000	Approved
Community Outreach (FTF Directed)	\$83,000	Approved
Community Awareness (FTF Directed)	\$30,000	Approved
Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness (statewide)	\$51,584	Approved
Statewide Evaluation (statewide)	\$107,344	Approved
Proposed Allotment Total	\$4,388,063	
Approved Allotment Total	\$4,088,088	



La PAZ/MOHAVE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Regional Funding Plan Three Year Strategic Direction SFY 2013-2015

LA PAZ/MOHAVE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

**Regional Funding Plan
Three Year Strategic Direction
SFY 2013-2015**

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SFY 2013 -2015 Regional Partnership Council Budget

Section I.**Regional Allocation Summary**

Funds Available State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2012- 2015

La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council

Allocations and Funding Sources	2012	2013	2014	2015
FY Allocation	\$3,895,016	\$3,897,043	\$3,904,837	\$3,919,480
Population Based Allocation	\$2,205,229	\$2,148,846	<i>(fy14 and fy15 allocations are estimates only, for purposes of planning)</i>	
Discretionary Allocation	\$1,303,032	\$1,262,570		
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)	\$386,755	\$485,627	\$3,904,837	\$3,919,480
Carry Forward From Previous	\$2,212,782	\$1,353,989	\$862,969	\$431,327
Total Regional Council Funds	\$6,107,798	\$5,251,032	\$4,767,806	\$4,350,807

Section II.

Review of SFY 2012 Funding Plan

II A. SFY 2012 Regional Partnership Council Priorities

The La Paz/Mohave Region consists of the two counties of La Paz and Mohave and the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe. The region covers nearly 17,000 square miles in Western Arizona. The communities of the region are diverse in population density and in demographics and are often isolated by large areas of unpopulated land. Services are concentrated in Bullhead, Kingman and Lake Havasu in Mohave County and Parker in La Paz County. In the more rural areas of the region such as Littlefield, Topock, Quartzsite, and Bouse services are severely limited.

The intent of the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council is to work with parents, local school districts and a wide variety of community partners to help prepare young children in the region for success in school. Serving vulnerable, at-risk populations and expanding services to reach geographic areas of the region that are under-served are top priorities. Services are provided across four domains: Early Learning; Family Support; Health/Mental Health; and Coordination and Communication. The following is a brief overview of the priorities addressed in SFY 2012:

Early Learning

Early Learning strategies address the prioritized need for high-quality, affordable early childhood education. Through partnerships with local school districts, the region provides expanded access to Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships for low-income families in Littlefield, Topock, Quartzsite, Bouse, Mohave Valley, Bullhead, Kingman and Lake Havasu. In addition, the Quality First, Expansion: Increase Slots/Capitol Expense, Community-Based Professional Development and T.E.A.C.H. strategies work collectively to build the capacity of the early childhood workforce in the region.

Family Support

Home Visitation and Food Security are the primary strategies in the Family Support domain. Family Support strategies address the prioritized need for access to comprehensive education and support for caregivers. These services are targeted to families with certain risk factors, such as low income. The intent is to stabilize the family, prevent child abuse and neglect, and provide information and resources based on the needs of the family. A small amount of funding in the Family Support domain is also allocated to Community-Based Parent Education Programs including Fatherhood Now and Parenting Children with Special Needs.

Health/Mental Health

Strategies in the Health and Mental Health domain address the prioritized need for improved access to high quality health services. Components that link families with routine health services and address infant and early childhood emotional well-being and positive social development are integrated in to almost every regional strategy. For example, the Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers, Child Care Health Consultation (capacity building), Home Visitation, Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships, and Developmental and Sensory Screening are all strategies with multiple health and mental health components that reach families where they are to mitigate risk factors. The intent of the council with these strategies is to connect children and families in the region who are frequently isolated, lack transportation, and live in families and communities with severely limited resources, with comprehensive services that provide appropriate

information, resources and referrals based on the needs of the family. Because innovative approaches are necessary to reach isolated and vulnerable children and families, significant resources are allocated to strategies designed to serve families who may opt-out of more traditional health care settings for a variety of reasons. In addition, the Therapist Incentives strategy recruits specialists, including Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, and Mental Health Specialists to serve in medically-underserved areas.

Coordination and Communication

These strategies address the prioritized need for improved coordination and communication of services. Improved coordination and communication of early childhood services is frequently cited as a critical need in the region. Stakeholders and FTF grantees have noted that services in the region are fragmented and families are often not aware of existing services. The Regional Council works to address this need by convening stakeholders for various work sessions through-out the year including strategic planning, new grantee orientations and workshops/training designed to build capacity. In SFY 2011-12, the Regional Council utilized the Regional Director to convene grantees for Grantee Coordination Meetings every other month. The purpose of these meetings is to strengthen partnerships, find opportunities to further integrate services, and engage partners in an ongoing process to move forward along a coordination continuum from lower intensity to higher intensity activities: networking → cooperation → coordination → collaboration. These meetings are ongoing and will continue to be convened quarterly beginning in January 2012.

The Regional Council also implements a staff-directed Community Outreach and Awareness strategy to address the prioritized need to increase public awareness and community support for early childhood development and health. The strategy is part of a state-wide, cross-regional communications plan. A Community Outreach Coordinator works together with the Regional Director and Council to implement various tactics at the community level, such as giving presentations about First Things First to local clubs and organizations and distributing branded parent education materials at local events.

The Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers is also a coordination and capacity-building strategy. This program brings together a multi-disciplinary team of child welfare professionals from across FTF regions including La Paz and Mohave Counties and the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, the Hualapai Tribe, and the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) at least monthly. The team includes those involved in the court system, Child Protective Services (CPS), foster parents and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), and other health, mental health and early intervention service providers. Various efforts related to system coordination and capacity building are implemented, including: 1) Monitoring case plans and supervising placements when children aged 5 years or younger are involved with the court system; 2) Coordinating essential services related to health, development, and social-emotional needs of young children in the child welfare system; 3) Providing ongoing specialized training in child development and infant and toddler mental health to child-serving agencies region-wide; and 4) Identifying opportunities to improve service delivery and outcomes for vulnerable families. These coordination activities support best planning for infants and young children in the child welfare system.

II B. SFY 2012 Strategies and Units of Service Review

La Paz/Mohave Units of Service by Strategy			
	Strategy Description	Fiscal Year 2012	
		Targeted Units	Contracted Units
Early Learning	Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships		
	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	164	164
	Number of private/public partner pre-K sites receiving	3	3
	Number of public school pre-k sites receiving support	6	6
	Expansion: Increase Slots and/or Capital Expense		
	Number of center based providers served	15	15
	Number of home based providers served	11	11
	Number of increased slots for participating children	75	75
	Quality First		
	Number of center based providers served	9	18
	Number of home based providers served	1	2
Family Support	Home Visitation		
	Number of families served	343	359
	Food Security		
Coordination	Number of food boxes distributed	4,080	50,525
	Court Teams		
	Number of children served	304	304
Professional Development	Number of trainings provided	12	36
	Community Based Professional Development - ECE		
	Number of participating professionals	200	220
Health and Mental Health	Scholarships TEACH		
	Number of professionals receiving scholarships	20	38
	Developmental and Sensory Screening		
	Number of children receiving hearing screening	125	125
	Number of children receiving vision screening	125	125
	Number of children screened for developmental delays	325	325
	Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness		
	Number of participants receiving Stipends and/or Loan	4	4
	Number of therapists receiving loan forgiveness	0	0
	Number of therapists receiving stipends	0	0
	Child Care Health Consultation		
	Number of center based providers served	20	34
	Number of home based providers served	10	6
	Mental Health Consultation		
	Number of center based providers served	0	0
	Number of home based providers served	0	0
	Number of people receiving tuition reimbursements	9	9
Community Outreach	Community Outreach (Statewide - FTF Directed)		
	No service units		
	Community Awareness (Statewide - FTF Directed)		
Needs and Assets	No service units		
	Needs and Assets		
Evaluation	No service units		
	2012 Evaluation		
	No service units		

Notes:

Quality First Service Numbers:

The Quality First strategy has Target Service Units of Homes and Centers. For this unique strategy, the Contracted Service Numbers will show as twice as much in comparison to the Targeted Service Numbers. This is due to implementation of the strategy through two service contracts (one for QF Coaching/Incentives, and a second for QF Assessments).

Scholarships TEACH and Child Care Health Consultation (CCHC) Service Numbers:

The Scholarships TEACH strategy and the CCHC strategy have Target Service Numbers which reflect the strategy targets of “additional TEACH” or “additional CCHC”. The Contracted Service Numbers include the “additional TEACH (or additional CCHC)” in addition to the Service Numbers funded through the regionally funded Quality First package. Therefore, for many regions, the Target Numbers will appear lower than the Contracted Numbers.

Food Security Numbers:

The number of food boxes the contractors are able to distribute exceeds the number anticipated by the Council.

II C. SFY 2012 Funding Summary Review

**SFY 2012
La Paz/Mohave
Funding Plan Summary**

Allocations and Funding Sources	SFY 2012	
SFY Allocation	\$3,895,016	
Population Based Allocation	\$2,205,229	
Discretionary Allocation	\$1,303,032	
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)	\$386,755	
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$2,212,782	
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$6,107,798	
Strategies	Allotted	Awarded
Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships	\$788,400	\$699,000
Expansion: Increase Slots and/or Capital Expense	\$302,275	\$302,275
Quality First	\$217,750	\$212,583
Home Visitation	\$1,254,888	\$1,246,723
Food Security	\$102,000	\$102,000
Court Teams	\$450,000	\$450,000
Community Based Professional Development (ECE)	\$461,430	\$461,430
Scholarships TEACH	\$97,700	\$97,700
Developmental and Sensory Screening	\$325,232	\$318,043
Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness	\$225,090	\$224,277
Child Care Health Consultation	\$160,000	\$148,269
Mental Health Consultation	\$100,000	\$100,000
Community Outreach	\$83,000	\$83,000
Community Awareness	\$40,000	\$40,000
Needs and Assets	\$38,700	\$38,675
Statewide Evaluation	\$107,344	\$107,344
Total Allotted/Awarded:	\$4,753,809	\$4,631,319
Total Unallotted/Unawarded:	\$1,353,989	\$122,490

II D. Review of Progress

Over the past year, the Regional Council has continued working together with grantees and stakeholders to further develop and refine the strategies required to reach our common goals. Considerable progress has been made in building the partnerships and relationships necessary to implement programs across four domains: Early Learning; Family Support; Health/Mental Health; and Coordination and Communication. The important work of building workforce capacity and connecting services across domains is ongoing.

Early Learning

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council has three strategies to address the prioritized need for access to quality, affordable early childhood education: Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships, Expansion: Increase Slots/Capitol Expense, and Quality First. Two Professional Development strategies also build the capacity of the early childhood workforce to provide high quality early learning opportunities for children in the region: T.E.A.C.H. and Community-Based Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators (ECE).

The Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship strategy is implemented in partnership with local school districts. The intent is to provide preschool programs for children who would not otherwise have them. It now provides a quality early learning experience for 214 children from low-income families in some of the most remote areas of the region including: Quartzsite, Bouse, Littlefield and Topock. These are communities where child and family services are severely limited and there are no regulated child care programs other than the school district program. In these smaller, more rural communities, the FTF-funded preschool program is serving most or all of the eligible preschool children in the community.

The intent of the second early learning strategy, Expansion: Increase Slots/Capitol Expense, is to expand early learning opportunities in under-served communities and increase the number of infant and toddler slots. Through this strategy, seven grants were awarded in the first quarter of SFY 2012. Of these, four were start-up grants to become licensed by the Department of Health Services (DHS) or certified by the Department of Economic Security (DES) and three were quality improvement grants. The award of these grants created 15 infant slots and 10 toddler slots. While expanding care in geographic areas of the region with few early care and education providers was the highest priority for this strategy, it has been very challenging to recruit new providers in the more remote areas of the region. After careful review of the available data, the Regional Council decided not to continue this strategy in SFY 2013. The licensed child care capacity in the region is approximately 3,731 slots and only 2,717 of these are currently filled. This information suggests different approaches are necessary to address the prioritized need, specifically a need to address barriers that keep families from utilizing vacancies in existing facilities, such as cost and quality.

The third Early Learning strategy in the region is the Quality First package. The Quality First program provides a comprehensive package of supports that impact the quality of services in existing child care facilities. These include coaching, incentives, Child Care Health Consultation, and T.E.A.C.H. scholarships. There are currently 12 Quality First sites in the region, 11 centers and 1 home. In order for the program to establish a presence in various communities through-out the large region, the Regional Council has prioritized equitable geographic distribution of sites during the selection process. Through this approach there are now programs participating in Quality First in Lake Havasu City (4); Kingman (4); Bullhead (1); Mohave Valley (1); Wenden (1) and Quartzsite (1).

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council also implements two professional development strategies to address the prioritized need for expanded access to high quality early learning opportunities. Community-Based Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators and T.E.A.C.H. scholarships improve the

capacity of the early childhood workforce to provide high-quality learning environments for children. The intent with the professional development strategies is to create stepping stones that facilitate the completion of educational milestones for professional child care providers.

The Community-Based Professional Development program offers college credit to child care professionals for completing a tiered series of community-based trainings in early childhood education. Tier One is for beginners, Tier Two is for those who have completed Tier One or who already have a Child Development Associate (CDA) or an Associate Degree (AA), and Tier Three is for Center Directors. The strategy works in collaboration with the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program and the local community college to transition providers from Tier Two into a CDA or AA program. The program enrolled 110 participants in the Tier One training series that began in September, 2011. This series will continue monthly for a total of eight, two-hour sessions in each of three locations: Lake Havasu, Bullhead and Kingman, making training widely available to professionals throughout the region. Enrollment is also underway for the next Tier Two training series, which is scheduled to begin in December, 2011 with 60 participants who have already completed Tier One. In addition, 21 Center Directors completed Tier Three in September, 2011. This program is very well-known and sought-out in the region. It consistently maintains a wait list for the next series and has a participant completion rate of 70%. One of the most positive outcomes achieved is that providers are now able to earn college credit at Mohave Community College for completing the community-based training. This will facilitate the process of moving people from Tier Two into CDA and AA programs.

Low participation in the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program by child care professionals enrolled in the region's Quality First program is an ongoing challenge. At the end of SFY 2011, only 11 of a possible 22.5 scholarships available to staff in Quality First sites were being utilized. This is due to a variety of factors, including the location of the T.E.A.C.H. specialist outside the region, a lack of coordination between T.E.A.C.H. and Quality First, reluctance on the part of professionals to enroll in college courses, and lack of availability of college coursework in the region. It is taking time to address these barriers, but progress has been made, particularly in the area of outreach and availability of college coursework, as evidenced by the fact that nearly all of the 20 regionally-funded T.E.A.C.H.-only slots are now filled.

Family Support

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council has two strategies to address the prioritized need for supports and services for vulnerable families: Home Visitation and Food Insecurity. The first family support strategy is home visitation. Currently 359 families receive in-home family support services through FTF-funded programs. Through this strategy, families receive a comprehensive package of supports based on the needs of the family. These include routine developmental screening, reminders and referrals for timely Well Child Checks and immunizations, and information and resources to support positive parent-child interaction and age-appropriate learning activities families can do together.

One of the most positive outcomes has been that families are increasingly enrolled in these programs during the prenatal period, which significantly improves the impact the services will have. Also, home visiting providers are working together with local school districts to transition children at age three from in-home programs to Pre-Kindergarten programs. An example of this is in Littlefield, where the Comprehensive Home-Based Early Head Start Program works closely with the Pre-Kindergarten program at Beaver Dam Elementary School and even utilizes space provided by the school district for their parent groups and play groups. This collaboration maximizes resources in this small community and facilitates the transition to school for children and families there.

The second family support strategy, Food Insecurity, addresses the ongoing issue of poverty and continued need to reduce hunger in the region. The present economy is such that more families than ever are faced

with trying to decide which is more important between basic needs like food, housing and utilities. Recognizing that hungry children can't focus on learning, the Regional Council first funded the food strategy during the First Things First Emergency Response Plan and then again in SFY 2012. Through this strategy, low-income families with children ages five and under receive food boxes to help meet the nutritional needs of the entire family. During strategic planning for SFY 2013, the Regional Council determined the need to bring prioritized strategies to scale and made the very difficult decision to not continue the food strategy after this year so that limited resources could be focused in other areas. It was noted however, that should unexpended dollars become available, this would be an important discussion to revisit.

Health/Mental Health

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council implements four strategies to address the prioritized need for improved access to quality health services: Developmental and Sensory Screening; Child Care Health Consultation; Professional Development for Mental Health Professionals (Mental Health Consultation) and Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness.

Through the Developmental Screening strategy, 48 children were screened in the first quarter of SFY 2012 which is somewhat lower than the anticipated 81. A priority for this strategy is to reach children in remote and isolated areas of the region where health services are severely limited. Inconsistent and often very low participation in screening events in the more isolated areas has been an on-going challenge for this strategy that has raised questions about the effectiveness of the approach. During strategic planning for SFY 2013 the council decided not to continue funding this strategy after this year, primarily because developmental screening is a required component in both the Pre-Kindergarten and Home Visitation strategies.

The Child Care Health Consultation strategy in the region currently serves 12 Quality First sites and 30 sites outside of Quality First. Through this strategy child care settings receive health and safety information to improve the quality of care in the facility. Due to significant changes to both the Quality First model and the Child Care Health Consultation model and the resulting financial impact to the region, the Regional Council made the decision not to fund the strategy outside of Quality First beginning in SFY 2013.

Through the Professional Development for Mental Health Professionals (Mental Health Consultation) strategy, a cohort of 9 mental health professionals from La Paz and Mohave Counties began a post-graduate professional training program to earn a certificate from the Harris Institute in SFY 2011. Of these, four completed the one-year certificate in Infant/Family Studies; four are currently completing their second year for the Infant/Family Clinical Practice Certificate; and one dropped out. At the start of SFY 2012, four new professionals began their first year in the two-year certificate program. Because only four new mental health professionals enrolled in the program at the start of SFY 2011, and because the strategy is now available to mental health professionals from any region through state-wide funding, the Regional Council made the decision to not continue funding this strategy after this year.

In quarter one of SFY 2012, the Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness strategy recruited a new Physical Therapist to the region and that person is now employed by the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) provider in the region. Additionally, one application from a Mental Health Specialist was received. As the target for this strategy is to recruit four therapists in SFY 2012, progress appears to be on track. Because the strategy was not intended to be on-going, funds allocated in SFY 2013 will support administrative costs only and the strategy will not be funded in SFY 2014 and 2015. This administrative cost will allow monitoring and distribution of stipends and loan repayments for therapists recruited to the region in SFY 2012.

Coordination and Communication

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council implements a staff-directed Community Outreach and Community Awareness strategy to address the prioritized need to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood. The strategy is part of the statewide, cross-regional communications campaign. Since starting in September of 2010, the Community Outreach Coordinator has created and distributed a Parent Resource Guide, recruited 847 Early Childhood Champions, represented First Things First at 45 community events and given 140 presentations across three FTF regions: La Paz/Mohave, the Hualapai Tribe and the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT). A significant amount of cooperation and civic engagement among grantees and community partners occurred region-wide to plan special events in recognition of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Week of the Young Child in April of 2011, and was one of the most positive outcomes of this strategy to date.

The Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers strategy addresses the prioritized need for improved service coordination. The Court Team reaches professionals across FTF regions (La Paz/Mohave including the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, CRIT, and the Hualapai Tribe) to provide high-quality training and technical assistance on infant and toddler mental health. To date the strategy has provided more than 55 training sessions in the region with an average attendance of 28 professionals participating. The team has recently met three key objectives: 1) Increased usage of the supervised visitation room; 2) Completion and approval of the documents and new process to combine Child Family Team (CFT) and staffing meetings with Child Protective Services (CPS); and 3) Cooperation with CPS and the local mental health service provider to flag cases ordered to mental health evaluations or counseling when the parent has a dependency or abuse case so that both the child and adult clinicians can coordinate services with CPS.

In addition, the regional council is currently working with Mohave Community College (MCC) and Northern Arizona University (NAU) on an Early Childhood Educators Summit to help more early childhood educators in the region secure needed credentials. The summit is planned for February 2012 and is a collaborative effort that has included multiple state and local partners in the planning process. It will gather La Paz and Mohave County personnel involved in early childhood education, including school teachers, administrators, educators, funders and others interested in early childhood education, to develop workable means of helping more teachers in the region achieve early childhood education certification requirements.

Section III.

Three Year Strategic Direction: SFY 2013-2015 Regional Funding Plan

III A. Overview

Setting the Strategic Direction

In preparation for the SFY 2013-2015 Regional Funding Plan, considerable thought and discussion have gone in to reviewing available data sources for strategic planning purposes. The 2010 Regional Needs and Assets Report and program evaluation data and narrative reports from First Things First (FTF) grantees were carefully considered and community input was solicited and stakeholders invited to participate in the planning process through a variety of methods. A Stakeholder Strategic Planning Survey was emailed to 561 stakeholders and 105 respondents completed the survey. Additionally, two Stakeholder Strategic Planning sessions were convened, one in La Paz County and one in Mohave County, with a total of 53 stakeholders participating in one of the sessions. Finally, a Funding Plan Workgroup meeting was convened to review the data and recommendations were developed and presented to the Regional Partnership Council for approval.

The following recommendations based on widely used and accepted research from Economist Art Rolnick were also used to further guide the selection of priorities and ensure the highest return on investment:

1. Start early, reach families during the prenatal period;
2. Focus on at-risk (vulnerable) populations;
3. Engage parents and caregivers;
4. Support quality, it matters;
5. Bring programs to scale.

The Regional Council was faced with difficult decisions related to priorities for the next three-year funding cycle. All current strategies could not be continued at the same level and sustained through SFY 2015. The council went back to the prioritized needs and reviewed the effectiveness of the current strategies to meet the prioritized needs and elected to retain those strategies that have had the greatest impact. Scope and reach were considered not just on a regional scale, but also at the community level. For example, a quality Pre-Kindergarten program in Bouse may not impact every child in the region, but it impacts 100% of the eligible children in Bouse. Likewise, the Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers does not serve every child age five and under in the region, but it does reach every young child in the region who comes in contact with the child welfare system.

The funding plan for SFY13 includes a number of significant strategy changes. The Council identified a need to re-focus strategies to align them with the prioritized needs, have the greatest impact upon children and families and remain within the region's allocation. This resulted in the elimination of the Food Security, Expansion: Increase Slots and/or Capital Expense, Developmental and Sensory Screening, Child Care Health Consultation outside of Quality First, and Mental Health Consultation strategies. The Court Team, Community-Based Training for Early Childhood Educators, and Recruitment - Stipends/Loan Forgiveness strategies were reduced to better align with anticipated expenditures. The Council also proposes to add two new strategies to the region, Family Support – Children with Special Needs and Family, Friends and Neighbors, to reach segments of the target population for existing strategies that have been identified as high priorities, but are not yet being reached through current efforts. Further, the Council developed an approach to Quality First that aligns with regionally available data indicating that Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships are the most effective method of promoting access to quality early childhood education in this rural region. This approach also preserves funding for as many of the existing Quality First sites as possible.

Strategic Approach to System Building

The La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council approached strategic planning by asking the question, *“How can we help build a comprehensive system of supports for young children in the region?”* Inherent in the question is the recognition that we are not the whole system, but a part of a larger system that includes a wide variety of state, federal and community-based organizations. The intent of the regional council in considering this question is to identify opportunities to address elements of system building (such as scope, reach, alignment of multiple funding streams, and quality) in meaningful ways in order to impact the development trajectories for young children in the region.

The proposed funding plan builds on existing services to reach populations that are not currently being served and will allow the region to bring evidence-based strategies to scale. An example of this is the Pre-Kindergarten Scholarship strategy. This strategy provides quality early learning opportunities for three-and-four-year-old children from low-income families in some of the most remote and rural areas of the region. When combined with the estimated number of children in the region served by Head Start (513) and other school district preschool programs (464), the proposed 234 children to be served through the strategy brings the total number of children participating in high-quality, public preschool programs in the region to 1,211 children, or approximately 96% of the 1,255 eligible children.

Another example is the region’s Home Visitation strategy. This strategy provides children with stronger, more supportive relationships with their parents through in-home services on a variety of topics, including parenting skills, early childhood development, literacy, etc. and connects parents with resources to help them better support their child’s health and early learning. According to vital statistics from the Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS), 2,123 births occur in the region each year with an estimated population of children age zero to three of 6,369. Existing home-visiting programs in the region (High Risk Perinatal Program, Healthy Families, First Steps, Bright Start and Health Start) provided through the Department of Economic Security (DES) and DHS serve an estimated 1,813 families. The proposed 343 families to be served by FTF will bring the combined total number of families receiving in-home services in the region to 2,156 families.

The regional council also understands that quality matters and it’s not just programs, but the connections and linkages between people, and the collective capacity of those people and programs, that keep children from “falling through the cracks.” As such, the plan includes a continuum of quality improvement and professional development measures, such as the Quality First package, the T.E.A.C.H. program, Community Based Training for Early Childhood Educators and the Court Team strategy, that are intentionally interconnected, share common goals, and build the capacity of the region’s early childhood workforce.

The Regional council envisions a comprehensive early childhood system that will result in better outcomes for young children in the region. As resources are limited, the regional council remains focused on serving vulnerable (at-risk) populations and expanding services to reach geographic areas of the region that are under-served. The following is a brief overview of priorities to be addressed:

- Expand access to high quality and affordable early childhood education;
- Expand access to comprehensive caregiver education and support;
- Improve policies and procedures to meet the developmental needs of young children involved in the child welfare system;
- Build the capacity of the early childhood workforce through education and training;
- Raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health.

Section III B.**Strategic Plan for SFY 2013 – 2015****Regional Priorities, Selected FTF Indicators and Priority Roles, and Strategies to Achieve Outcomes**

Regional Priority to be addressed	School Readiness Indicators Correlated to the needs and priority roles	FTF Priority Roles in the Early Childhood System	SFY 2013-2015 Strategies
<p>Limited access to quality and affordable early childhood education</p> <p>Limited access to comprehensive caregiver education and support</p> <p>Need for policies and procedures that meet the developmental needs of young children and their families involved in the child welfare system</p> <p>Need for a more skilled and educated early childhood workforce</p> <p>Limited knowledge and awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health</p>	<p>#/% children demonstrating school readiness at kindergarten entry in the development domains of social-emotional, language and literacy, cognitive, and motor and physical</p> <p>% of families who report they are competent and confident about their ability to support their child's safety, health and well being</p> <p>% of children with newly identified developmental delays during the kindergarten year</p>	<p>Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for increased availability of and access to high quality, regulated, culturally responsive and affordable early care and education programs. <i>(EL-3)</i></p> <p>Supports and Services for Families - Convene partners, provide leadership, provide funding, and advocate for development, enhancement, and sustainability of a variety of high quality, culturally responsive, and affordable services, supports, and community resources for young children and their families. <i>(FS&L-2)</i></p> <p>Professional Development System – Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for the development and enhancement of an early childhood professional development system that addresses availability, accessibility, affordability, quality, and articulation. <i>(PD-1)</i></p> <p>Building Public Awareness and Support - Convene partners, provide leadership, and provide funding for efforts to increase public awareness of and support for early childhood development, health, and early education among partners, public officials, policy makers, and the public. <i>(PA-1)</i></p>	<p>Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships</p> <p>Quality First Package (including Child Care Health Consultation, QF Scholarships and TEACH) Additional TEACH Additional QF Rating Only</p> <p>Community-Based Professional Development Early Care and Education Professionals</p> <p>Family, Friends and Neighbors*</p> <p>Home Visitation</p> <p>Parent Coaching – Children with Special Needs*</p> <p>Court Teams</p> <p>Community Outreach</p> <p>Community Awareness</p> <p>Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness</p> <p>Statewide Evaluation</p> <p>(*) Indicates the strategy is new to the region.</p>

Section III C.**Strategy Descriptions including Target Populations and Funding Levels****Strategy: Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships****Strategy Description**

Provides scholarships to quality preschool programs that allow them to serve more children.

Strategy Narrative

The Pre-Kindergarten strategy in the region addresses the prioritized need for improved access to quality and affordable early childhood education. It increases the number of three and four year olds from low-income families enrolled in quality preschool programs. Stakeholders have consistently identified quality preschool programs as one of the most important service that is missing in the region. Available data also indicate quality preschool programs are lacking or insufficient in the region, especially in the more remote and rural communities. Through partnerships with local school districts, this strategy expands access to quality preschool programs in communities where known shortages exist.

Quality Pre-Kindergarten programs have significant, persistent benefits. Research has consistently shown that quality Pre-Kindergarten programs benefit not only individual students, but also school districts and communities. Nobel-Prize-winning economist James Heckman estimates that every dollar spent on early childhood education returns 10 cents annually over the life of a child. In addition, multiple longitudinal studies show that investments in high-quality preschool programs improve outcomes for children. These outcomes include school success, high school graduation, college attendance and improved earnings. Negative outcomes are also reduced, such as involvement in the criminal justice system, grade repetition and high school dropout rates. Research also finds positive outcomes do not occur when quality is diluted.

Partnering directly with school districts to expand existing Pre-Kindergarten programs is a strategy that has significantly built the capacity in the region to provide quality early learning opportunities, especially in communities where access to early childhood education is severely limited. In determining which public school districts to partner with, the council prioritized communities with known shortages, such as those with no Head Start, no regulated child care, and those with the most families waiting to receive child care subsidies. The regional council is now providing early learning opportunities for 214 children who would not otherwise have them. As of December 2011, agreements will be in place with eight school districts:

Littlefield Unified School District	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	40
Topock Elementary School District	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	20
E.Q. Scholars in Quartzsite	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	20
Mohave Valley Elementary School District	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	20
Bullhead City Elementary School District	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	24
Kingman Unified School District	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	40
Bouse Unified School District	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	10
Lake Havasu Unified School District	Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	40

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This strategy aligns with the Quality First strategy. In SFY 2013, all nine Pre-Kindergarten programs will be enrolled in Quality First. Full participation in the Quality First package by all existing Pre-Kindergarten sites is necessary in order to support the sites to achieve and maintain the required minimum star rating of three stars and allow them continue providing Pre-Kindergarten scholarships in SFY 2014-15.

Target Population Description

To date, agreements are in place with eight public school districts in the La Paz/Mohave Region. A ninth, the Masada Charter School in Centennial Park, is also prioritized for expansion by 20 slots in SFY 2012. Centennial Park is a small community in the northern most part of Mohave County, on the border with Utah and near Colorado City, with no Head Start program and no regulated child care providers.

There are an estimated 1,255 eligible three and four year old children from low-income families in the region. Of these, approximately 513 are currently enrolled in Head Start and another 464 participate in other public preschool programs. The proposed 234 children to be served through this strategy brings the combined total number of children participating in public preschool programs in the region to an estimated 1,211 children, or approximately 96% of eligible children.

Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of FTF-funded pre-K children	234	234	234
Number of private/public partner pre-K sites receiving support	4	4	4
Number of public school pre-k sites receiving support	9	9	9
Funding Level*	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships	\$1,193,100	\$1,193,100	\$1,193,100

(*) Please note that public school districts contribute a minimum of 20% in matching funds.

Strategy: Quality First**Strategy Description**

Supports provided to early care and education centers and homes to improve the quality of programs, including: on-site coaching; program assessment; financial resources; teacher education scholarships; and consultants specializing in health and safety practices.

Strategy Narrative

Quality First addresses the prioritized need for improved access to quality, affordable early childhood education in the La Paz/Mohave Region. It expands the number of children with access to high quality early education, including learning materials that are developmentally appropriate, a curriculum focused on early literacy and teachers trained to work with infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Quality First provides supports through nine program components: coaching, financial incentives, licensure fee assistance, child care scholarships, T.E.A.C.H., Child Care Health Consultation, program assessment, assignment of star rating and specialized technical assistance. The addition of child care scholarships to this strategy in SFY 2013 will help more low-income families receive quality child care.

The Quality First strategy plays an important role in strengthening the Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade education system in the region and state. Research finds that positive outcomes for children do not occur when the quality of early childhood education is diluted. The star rating system will provide families with a way to identify and select high quality programs for their children. It also will create an expectation of high quality and a consistent method for measuring quality and provide programs with resources to support them in making changes that impact quality and ultimately outcomes for children.

Target Population Description

There are approximately 90 licensed early care and education programs in the La Paz/Mohave Region. Of these, 12 are currently enrolled in Quality First. The Regional Council has prioritized Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships as the primary vehicle in the region for promoting access to quality child care. The Council developed an approach to Quality First that aligns with this priority while attempting to preserve as many existing Quality First sites as possible. Among the factors contributing to this decision:

- In many areas of the rural region, FTF-funded Pre-Kindergarten sites provide the only licensed/regulated child care in the community;
- Pre-Kindergarten sites will be assessed and rated during SFY 2013 and must achieve a three star rating to continue providing the same level of scholarships;
- Regional funding could not support the transition of all existing sites to the new Quality First model.

The breakdown of the 18 Quality First sites beginning in SFY 2013 will be as follows:

- Seven sites will be the full package – one home and six centers already enrolled in the program;
- Nine will be the Quality First full package without scholarships and reserved for existing Pre-Kindergarten sites, of which only two are currently enrolled in Quality First;
- Two additional sites will be Quality First rating only and reserved for the two school districts that currently provide Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships in more than one location within the school district (Lake Havasu Unified School District and Kingman Unified School District).

This approach results in the disenrollment of three existing Quality First sites. The Regional Council's preference is that disenrollment occur on a voluntary basis, if possible. If this is not possible, the Council is hopeful that disenrollment will occur in the Lake Havasu City and/or Kingman areas, which have the most existing Quality First sites.

Target Service Units - Quality First	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of center based providers served	17	17	17
Number of home based providers served	1	1	1
Funding Levels	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Quality First	\$299,975	\$299,975	\$299,975
Child Care Health Consultation	\$40,320	\$40,320	\$40,320
QF Child Care Scholarships	\$266,740	\$266,740	\$266,740
TEACH Scholarships	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000

Target Service Units - Child Care Health Consultation	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of center based providers served	15	15	15
Number of home based providers served	1	1	1
Target Service Units - Scholarships TEACH			
Number of professionals receiving scholarships	51	51	51
Target Service Units - QF Child Care Scholarships			
Number of children receiving scholarships	42*	42*	42*

(*) Please Note: It is the preference of the Regional Council that these scholarships be designated for infants and toddlers.

Strategy: Scholarships TEACH (In Addition to QF Package)
<p>Strategy Narrative</p> <p>This strategy addresses the need for a skilled and educated early childhood workforce. The T.E.A.C.H. program provides scholarships for higher education and credentialing to early care and education teachers in order to improve the professional skills of those providing care to children 5 and younger.</p>
<p>Target Population Description</p> <p>An additional 20 T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships outside the Quality First package are reserved for child care professionals serving children ages five and under in sites not currently enrolled in Quality First.</p>
Strategy: Quality First (Rating Only)
<p>Strategy Narrative</p> <p>Rating Only participation includes two components of Quality First: the assessment and assignment of a star rating. Not all existing Pre-Kindergarten sites in the region can be enrolled in full participation in Quality First due to funding constraints. This strategy provides a lower cost model. In SFY 2013, all Pre-Kindergarten sites will be required to be rated by Quality First and in SFY 2014 all Pre-Kindergarten sites will be required to have a star rating of at least three stars in order to continue providing scholarships. The rating only option for two sites will allow two school districts currently providing Pre-Kindergarten scholarships in more than one preschool site within the school district to continue providing scholarships in both sites. Beginning in SFY 2013, one site in each district will be enrolled in Quality First full participation and one site will participate in the rating only option.</p>
<p>Target Population Description</p> <p>The rating only option will be utilized by two school districts currently providing Pre-Kindergarten scholarships in two sites – Lake Havasu Unified School District and Kingman Unified School District.</p>

Strategy: Community-Based Professional Development (Early Childhood Education)			
Strategy Description Provides quality education and training in community settings to early care and education professionals. Improves the professional skills of those providing care and education to children 5 and younger.			
Strategy Narrative <p>This strategy addresses the prioritized need for a skilled and educated early childhood workforce. It works together with the other strategies in the early learning continuum to create stepping-stones that facilitate completion of educational milestones. College credit is offered to child care professionals for completing a tiered series of community-based trainings in early childhood education. Tier One is for beginners, Tier Two is for those who have completed Tier One or who already have a CDA or AA, and Tier Three is for Center Directors. The strategy works in collaboration with the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program and the local community college to transition providers from Tier Two in to a CDA or AA program.</p> <p>An Ohio Department of Education (January 2006) report entitled Critical Issues in Early Educator Professional and Workforce Development supports the correlation between teacher/administrator education and training, and the quality of the early childhood program. Research also finds that positive outcomes for children do not occur when the quality of the program is diluted.</p> <p>The funding for this strategy was slightly decreased, from \$461,430 in SFY 2012 to \$400,000 in SFY 2013, in order to bring the amount of the contract closer to the amount of actual expenditures.</p>			
Target Population Description The target population for this strategy is 200 early childhood professionals working in the La Paz/Mohave region. This strategy universally targets the population providing a continuum of educational levels to best meet the needs of the early childhood professional. According to the Department of Economic Security (DES) 2008 Market Rate Survey, approximately 2,717 children are currently enrolled in regulated child care facilities in the region. Using an average staff to child ratio of 1:11, it is estimated that the population of professional child care providers in the region is approximately 247 providers. The strategy was first funded in the region in fiscal year 2010 with the same target service number of 200 professionals and these target service numbers have consistently been met.			
Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of participating professionals	200	200	200
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Community Based Professional Development (ECE)	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000

Strategy: Family, Friends and Neighbors			
Strategy Description Supports provided to family, friend and neighbor caregivers include training and financial resources. Improves the quality of care and education that children receive in unregulated child care homes.			
Strategy Narrative <p>This strategy is new to the region. It will add to the early learning continuum in the region by targeting a population that is not yet being reached through existing strategies. It improves the quality of care and education that children receive in unregulated child care homes.</p> <p>In Arizona, home-based child care providers can legally care for four children for pay, with a maximum limit of six children under the age of 12, including their own. For these homes, there is no licensing or regulatory requirement; therefore, there is no mechanism or support system in place to assist these providers in creating high-quality learning environments for the children in their care.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that training provided to home-based family, friend, and neighbor caregivers can result in positive outcomes for children. In a study including Arizona home-based providers, impact was noted in the following areas: 1) Safety in the home environment, particularly fire safety; 2) Establishing and maintaining a daily schedule for the children; 3) Encouraging providers to utilize the resources of their local library; 4) Developing a written formalized child care services agreement with parents, and 5) Increased knowledge regarding the Child and Adult Food Program.</p> <p>The Family, Friend and Neighbor strategy will provide both in-home support and community-based training in at least one Fall and one Spring training series in each of two locations in the region, one in Mohave County and one in La Paz County, for a total of four series each year. Each training series will consist of one session per week for 14-weeks. Components included in the model are an evidence-based curriculum, training and practice in a group setting on how to provide a quality early learning environment, and financial incentives to help purchase safety and quality-improvement equipment and materials.</p>			
Target Population Description <p>Although the number of children cared for in family, friend or neighbor care is currently unknown, it is estimated that approximately 83% of children in the region receive care from family, friends and neighbors. The 2010 Regional Needs and Assets Report indicated that regulated providers in the region have the capacity to provide care for about 24% of the children ages birth through five in the region, but normally only about 17% attend on a typical day.</p> <p>The target service number for this strategy is 60 unregulated, home-based child care providers. It is estimated that approximately 15 providers will attend each series and four series per year are planned, two in Mohave County and two in La Paz County. The Regional Council will monitor the target service numbers in SFY 2013 to assess if the target is appropriate for the region.</p>			
Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of home based providers served	60	60	60
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Family, Friends & Neighbors	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

Strategy: Home Visitation**Strategy Description**

Provides voluntary in-home services for infants, children and their families, focusing on parenting skills, early physical and social development, literacy, health and nutrition. Connect families to resources to support their child's health and early learning.

Strategy Narrative

This strategy addresses the prioritized need for comprehensive caregiver education and support. It gives young children stronger, more supportive relationships with their parents through in-home services on a variety of topics, including parenting skills, early childhood development, literacy, etc. and connects parents with community resources to help them better support their child's health and early learning.

Stakeholders in the region have consistently identified parent education and support for caregivers as one of the most important service that is missing. Comprehensive, evidence-based home visitation programs provide participating families of infants and toddlers with information and education on parenting, child development and health topics while assisting with connections to other resources or programs as needed.

Research indicates that home visiting program models have been able to help parents learn parenting skills, increase confidence in their parenting skills, promote appropriate parent-child interactions and increase linkages with community services including health and social services. Additionally, the greatest evidence of impact and realization of outcomes is with new parents of infants and toddlers. This aligns with the science of the brain and what is now known about the critical periods in infancy and toddlerhood related to brain development. Outcomes may include:

- Better birth outcomes such as birth weight;
- More efficient use of health care services;
- Early detection of developmental delays;
- Enhanced parent-child interactions and increased parent involvement;
- Positive developmental outcomes such as social competence and fewer behavior problems.

The Friends National Resource Center for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Fact Sheet #15 on Home Visiting Programs Overview of Selected Models (December 2007) states that, "The common ground that unites home visiting program models is the importance placed on infant and child development from birth to three years, the idea that parents play a pivotal role in shaping children's lives, and that often the best way to reach families with young children is by bringing services to their front door."

Target Population Description

The population served by home visiting programs includes expectant parents and families with children birth through age 5 in the region. Home visitation is most impactful with new parents and at-risk families of infants and toddlers. It is important to reach and support families through home visitation as early as possible. Ideally, home visitation programs begin during the prenatal period with new parents or at-risk families and continually support the family from infancy into toddlerhood.

Approximately 2,123 births occur in the region each year with an estimated population of children age zero to three of 6,369. Existing home-visiting programs in the region provided through the Department of Economic Security (DES) and the Department of Health Services (DHS) serve approximately 1,813 families. The 343 families to be served by FTF will bring the combined total number of families receiving in-home services in the region to 2,156 families.

Geographic areas targeted for expansion of home visiting include the tribal lands of the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe, the northern most part of Mohave County, including Littlefield and Colorado City, and La Paz County.

Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of families served	343	343	343
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Home Visitation	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000

Strategy: Parent Coaching – Children with Special Needs**Strategy Description**

This strategy provides parent coaching, group activities and services to the parents of children with special needs who are not eligible for other publicly -funded programs. Services are designed to help the child reach his/her fullest potential.

Strategy Narrative

This strategy is new to the region. It addresses the prioritized need for comprehensive caregiver education and support and expands the existing family support continuum to include a population not currently being reached. Stakeholders in the region have consistently identified parent education and coaching as one of the most important service that is missing in the region. In particular, regionally available data indicate that services are needed to support young children with developmental delays or who are at risk for delays who do not qualify for services through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP).

In the first three-year funding cycle, the council supported a developmental screening strategy that attempted to reach children in medically underserved areas to provide screenings and connect families with medical homes. Inconsistent and often very low participation in screening events in the more isolated areas was a persistent challenge that ultimately raised questions about the effectiveness of the approach. During strategic planning for SFY 2013, the decision was made to end the strategy as screening is widely available in the region through the Home Visitation and Pre-Kindergarten strategies. Instead, it was determined that a strategy was needed to make sure that once delays and special needs are identified, that appropriate services are available to support the needs of the family.

Parent coaching for children with special needs is a strategy that improves the education and health of children with special needs. It specifically targets children who have been screened and referred for evaluation of eligibility for intervention services through AzEIP or the local school district, but who are found ineligible. Although these children do not qualify for state and/or federally funded specialized services, they can still benefit from enhanced support by their families and caregivers. To assist families in developing the knowledge, skills and ability to help their children reach their fullest potential, this strategy provides individualized support in coordination with an interactive parent and child together model of services. The core components of the model include:

- Individual visits;
- Ongoing child progress monitoring and screening;
- Parent and child interactive time;
- Networking and coordination of services.

Target Population Description

The Parent Coaching strategy specifically targets children who have been screened and referred for evaluation of eligibility for intervention services through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP) or the local school district, but who are found not to qualify for services. Based on information provided by the AzEIP service provider in the region, it is estimated that approximately 60 children per year are screened and found to not qualify for publicly-funded programs, who would benefit from parent coaching.

Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of families served	60	60	60
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Parent Coaching – Children with Special Needs	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000

Strategy: Court Team**Strategy Description**

This strategy assigns multidisciplinary teams, led by superior court judges, to monitor case plans and supervise placement when a child 5 or younger is involved with the court system.

Strategy Narrative

This strategy addresses the prioritized need for policies and procedures that meet the developmental needs of young children and their families involved in the child welfare system. The principal goals of Court Teams are to improve outcomes and reduce the recurrence of abuse and neglect for infants and toddlers. These goals are achieved by developing court-community teams led by superior court judges to:

- Raise awareness of the developmental needs of maltreated infants and toddlers;
- Assure case plans that support the developmental needs of these children;
- Assure a permanency plan that results in stable placements for children with foster families, relatives, or other caretakers;
- Assure continuing focus on child wellbeing when children are returned to parents, relatives, or other caretakers.

Court Teams promote policies and procedures that will foster a system of care that focuses on meeting the developmental needs of children and supports their healthy development. The Court Team model involves eight core components supported by the La Paz/Mohave Regional Partnership Council:

- **Judicial Leadership:** Local judges in Court Team communities are the catalysts for the programs that meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families.
- **Local Community Coordinator:** To coordinate services and resources in support of infants and toddlers in the court systems.
- **Court Team:** Made up of key community stakeholders who commit to working to restructure the way the community responds to the needs of maltreated infants and toddlers.
- **Monthly Case Reviews:** Including all individuals and organizations delivering court-mandated services to infants and toddlers meet together with the judge to review progress on each case.
- **Court-Ordered Referrals:** Referrals are expanded to include a variety of services for children.
- **Training and Technical Assistance:** To court personnel and community service providers on topics such as being more responsive to, and responsible for, the children's social and emotional development needs; general infant and toddler development; parenting interventions; services available to foster children in the community; and the impact of trauma on children.
- **Mental Health Treatment:** Referral to appropriate mental health services for children and families.
- **Resource Materials:** Including bench books and training videos developed by Zero to Three and other organizations involved with the development of Court Teams.

Established Court Team outcomes include:

- A significant increase in the services provided to eligible children and their parents, particularly in health care including pediatric visits and developmental screening for early intervention services;
- Reductions in the number of out-of-home placements and increase in relative/kinship placements.
- More children remaining in one foster home throughout their time in out-of-home care;
- Increase in parent-child visits.

The Court Team in the La Paz/Mohave region reaches child and family service providers across FTF regions, including the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe in the La Paz/Mohave Region and the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) and Hualapai Tribe to provide training and technical assistance on infant and toddler mental health and promote the social and emotional well-being of young children involved in the court system. To date the strategy has provided more than 55 training sessions with an average attendance of 28 professionals participating. The team works in close consultation with an advisory committee that continually recommends system measures to improve policies and procedures in support of young children. The team has recently met three key objectives: 1) Increased usage of the supervised visitation room; 2) Completion and approval of the documents and new process to combine Child Family Team (CFT) and staffing meetings with Child Protective Services (CPS); and 3) Cooperation with CPS and the local mental health service provider to flag cases ordered to mental health evaluations or counseling when the parent has a dependency or abuse case so that both the child and adult clinicians can coordinate services with CPS.

First Things First (FTF) funding in support of Court Teams is a catalyst to initiate system change for an extremely vulnerable, high-risk population of infants and toddlers involved child welfare and the court system. The funding for this strategy was slightly decreased, from \$450,000 in SFY 2012 to \$400,000 in SFY 2013, in order to bring the amount of the contract closer to the amount of actual expenditures.

Target Population Description

This strategy targets all children birth through five who enter the court system in the region each year (approximately 304).

Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of children served	304	304	304
Number of trainings provided	36	36	36
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Court Teams	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000

Strategy: Community Outreach			
Strategy Description The Community Outreach strategy provides grassroots support and engagement to increase parent and community awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health.			
Strategy Narrative This strategy is staff-directed. It is aligned with the Community Awareness strategy and addresses the prioritized need to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health in the region. A Community Outreach Coordinator works in partnership with the regional council and staff to implement various tactics as part of a statewide, cross-regional communications campaign. In the La Paz/Mohave Region, the outreach plan has the following objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate people on the importance of early childhood development and health; 2. Recruit and retain new champions of early childhood development and health; 3. Motivate champions to take action on behalf of young children and FTF. The intent of this strategy is that all Arizonans will be actively engaged in supporting young kids in their communities. A variety of tactics are used to achieve the objectives, including presentations to community groups, information tables at community events, one-on-one meetings with key leaders in priority audiences, FTF-hosted Family Fun Days, and broad distribution of FTF-branded leave behinds and educational materials such as Born Learning materials and Scholastic children's books.			
Target Population Description This is a universal strategy that targets the citizens of the entire region.			
Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
No target service units identified for this strategy	NA	NA	NA
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Community Outreach	\$83,000	\$83,000	\$83,000

Strategy: Community Awareness			
Strategy Description The Community Awareness strategy uses a variety of community-based activities and materials to increase public awareness of the critical importance of early childhood development and health.			
Strategy Narrative This strategy is staff-directed. It is aligned with the Community Outreach strategy and addresses the prioritized need to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development and health in the region. A Community Outreach Coordinator works in partnership with the regional council and staff to implement various tactics as part of a statewide, cross-regional communications campaign. In the La Paz/Mohave Region, the outreach plan has the following objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate people on the importance of early childhood development and health; 2. Recruit and retain new champions of early childhood development and health; 3. Motivate champions to take action on behalf of young children and FTF. <p>The intent of this strategy is that all Arizonans will be actively engaged in supporting young kids in their communities. A variety of tactics are used to achieve the objectives, including presentations to community groups, information tables at community events, one-on-one meetings with key leaders in priority audiences, FTF-hosted Family Fun Days, and broad distribution of FTF-branded leave behinds and educational materials such as Born Learning materials and Scholastic children's books.</p>			
Target Population Description This is a universal strategy that targets the citizens of entire region.			
Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
No target service units identified for this strategy	NA	NA	NA
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Community Awareness	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000

Strategy: Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness**Strategy Description**

The Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness strategy offers professionals financial incentives to provide services in underserved communities.

Strategy Narrative

This strategy improves the quality and range of therapeutic and intervention services in underserved communities. Regionally available data indicate a lack of specialists available to serve young children in the region. The provider Loan Repayment and/or Stipend Program provides financial incentives for the purpose of recruiting and/or retaining therapists and other intervention professionals to provide therapeutic services in underserved communities where access to these services is limited. Eligible disciplines are Physical Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Mental Health Specialists and Child Psychologists. Providers commit to a time of service obligation in return for the financial benefits.

The first component of the program is established to pay off portions of education loans. The program additionally provides recruitment incentives to agencies to support the hiring and retention of professionals. The strategy is administered through the Department of Health Services which provides the following:

- Oversight and management of the distribution of loan repayment funds to financial institutions on behalf of eligible clinicians as well as distribution of stipend payments.
- Outreach and recruitment of potentially eligible clinicians.
- Oversight and maintenance of service obligations attached to funds distribution

The target service number for SFY 2012 is four therapists. Two of these have been recruited to the region as of December of 2011 – one Physical Therapist and one Mental Health Specialist. The amount allocated to the strategy for therapist incentives in SFY 2012 is sufficient to support all four therapists for two years.

Target Population Description

The target service number for SFY 2012 is four therapists. Funding in SFY 2013 is for administrative costs to process payments for those four therapists only. No new therapists will be recruited.

Target Service Units	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Number of therapists receiving stipend and/or loan	4	0	0
Funding Level	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness	\$51,584	\$0	\$0

Strategy: Statewide Evaluation			
Strategy Description Statewide Evaluation includes the studies and evaluation work which inform the FTF Board and the 31 Regional Partnership Councils. Examples include: the baseline Needs and Assets reports, specific focused studies, and statewide research and evaluation on the developing early childhood system.			
Strategy Narrative First Things First has, and is growing, a multi-level system of research and evaluation strategies designed to be responsive to the informational needs of varied stakeholder groups, including the First Things First Board, Regional Partnership Councils, and Arizona citizens. The research and evaluation system is designed to provide both depth and breadth of high quality information, from collecting programmatic data to evaluating the overall impact of the First Things First Early Childhood System model. The system provides a framework for conducting statewide and regional studies centered on identifying current and changing needs of families and children birth to five, and the impact of programs and strategies across all First Things First priority areas. The First Things First research and evaluation system is a knowledge building system, designed to advance the understanding of needs, activities, and effectiveness. Individually and collectively, research and evaluation strategies generate data and findings which can be used to identify trends and changes in school readiness indicators and therefore to support strategic planning and decision-making which promotes the health and well-being of young children.			
Target Service Units	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
No target service units identified for this strategy	NA	NA	NA
Funding Level	SFY 13	SFY 14	SFY 15
Statewide Evaluation	\$107,344	\$107,344	\$107,344

Section III D. Proposed Funding Summary

SFY 2013 - 2015 Regional Partnership Council Budget



SFY 2013 - 2015 La Paz/Mohave Funding Plan Summary

Allocations and Funding Sources	2013	2014	2015
SFY Allocation	\$3,897,043	\$3,904,837	\$3,919,480
Population Based Allocation	\$2,148,846		
Discretionary Allocation	\$1,262,570		
Other (FTF Fund balance addition)	\$485,627	\$3,904,837	\$3,919,480
Carry Forward From Previous Year	\$1,353,989	\$862,969	\$431,327
Total Regional Council Funds Available	\$5,251,032	\$4,767,806	\$4,350,807
Strategies	Proposed Allotment	Proposed Allotment	Proposed Allotment
Pre-Kindergarten Scholarships	\$1,193,100	\$1,193,100	\$1,193,100
Quality First	\$299,975	\$299,975	\$299,975
Child Care Health Consultation	\$40,320	\$40,320	\$40,320
Quality First Child Care Scholarships	\$266,740	\$266,740	\$266,740
Scholarships TEACH (Additional TEACH)	\$66,000	\$66,000	\$66,000
Community Based Professional Development (ECE)	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
Family, Friends & Neighbors	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Home Visitation	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000
Parent Coaching – Children with Special Needs	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
Court Teams	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
Community Outreach	\$83,000	\$83,000	\$83,000
Community Awareness	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Recruitment – Stipends/Loan Forgiveness	\$51,584	\$0	\$0
Statewide Evaluation	\$107,344	\$107,344	\$107,344
Proposed Allotment Total:	\$4,388,063	\$4,336,479	\$4,336,479
Total Unallotted	\$862,969	\$431,327	\$14,328